A Study on Brand Positioning of Luxury Cars in Rajasthan

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INTRODUCTION

Now days marketing is vital force for any organization. In the primitive age, there was no need to produce for others. Thus naturally, there was no trade or market. Everyone cultivated his own faculty through personal efforts or Expertise. At the very initial stages of Socio-Cultural transmission, the system of production was influenced by personal initiatives that followed by mutual co-operation in the barter system (Jha and Singh, 1988). In the initial period, Marketing for any firm was merely differ from selling and "Meeting needs profitably" was its meaning but as time passed and competition increased among the firms, they also searched unique and innovative technique to promote themselves in market. Presently marketing is all about communicating, meeting and delivering value to the customers not only product or service (Kotler et al, 2006). For delivering value to customer an organization must have complete information of the customer and customer-oriented marketing became an important area of study. For that Marketers have divided the marketing into part to work in more efficient way i.e. Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning and they are key elements of marketing for most consumer goods (Kotler et al, 2006). Now consumer-oriented marketing approach came to be called as the marketing concept (Kazmi, 2010).

1. Segmentation: Market Segmentation divides the market into distinct groups of homogeneous consumers who have similar needs and consumer behavior (Keller, Parameswaran, Jacob, 2010).

2. Targeting: Market Targeting is the selection of one or more of the segments identified for the company to Pursue (Keller, Parameswaran, Jacob, 2010).

3. Positioning: Market Positioning is at the heart of marketing strategy. It is the act of designing the company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer's minds (Kotler, Keller, 2006).

Segmentation and Targeting is only related to the marketer and depend completely on promoter not to the consumer but positioning is such a part which is decided by the promoter but tested by the consumer. All these three part are very much co-related and if any one of them be wrong than

other two will also go wrong. But if we consider first two part watchfully than positioning will play its role. Positioning means identifying and establishing point of parity and point of difference to establish the right brand identity and brand image (Keller, Sternthal, Tybout 2002). Unique, meaningful point of difference after determining competitor's position, provide a competitive advantage and reason why customer should buy the brand. Point of difference is similar to the notion of Unique Selling Preposition (USP). Customer get a reason to buy the product and differ that product from others as well with advantage. If we offer someone a glass full of Dihydrogen monoxide nobody will be interested to drink it but if we say have a glass of water, drinking will be pleasure.

According to Ries & Trout (1986) positioning theory is based on three propositions:

1. We live in an over communicated society, bombarded with information on a daily basis.

2. The mind has developed a defense system against the clutter.

3. The only way to cut through the clutter to reach the mind is through simplified and focused messages and whole concentration is on the customer mind only.

In above point quality of product should have to be good and a brand should have in it what it promise but if product do not fulfill its promise than it is very difficult to retain the customer. So we have to consider the post purchase behavior as well and Product positioning influences the evaluation of alternatives in post purchase behavior.

These elements roughly relate to the components of a brand's position as described by Aaker (1996); they are:

1. Target audience.
2. Subset of identity/value proposition.
3. Create advantage and
4. Actively communicate.

In developing a positioning, the marketer must consider four things (Parikshat S. Manhas, 2010):

1. The target market
2. How the product is different or better than competitors

3. The value of this difference to the target market
4. The ability to demonstrate or communicate this difference to the target market

As the customer compares products, product positioning will help the customer determine the differences between the products, and help them select the product which best meets their evaluation criteria. When a customer wants to purchase a product, they perform a level of problem solving to determine which product and brand to purchase. A large factor in the problem solving is the customer's level of involvement with the product. The level of involvement depends on the customer's interest in the product, the cost of the product, how visible the product is to others, and the importance of the product (Keller, Parameswaran, Jacob, 2010).

In communication interfacing the benefits that the product will provide rather than the product feature will be more beneficial for an organization Leon et al (2012). More emphasis should be on the customer rather than product. The nature of product positioning is to distinguish one brand's product from the others, so product positioning mainly influences choice between similar products.

In the marketing context, the term " customer " refers not only to the act of purchase itself, but also to patterns of aggregate buying which include pre-purchase and post-purchase activities. Pre-purchase activity might consist of the growing awareness of a need or want, and a search for and evaluation of information about the products and brands that might satisfy it. Post-purchase activities include the evaluation of the purchased item in use and the reduction of any anxiety which accompanies the purchase of expensive and infrequently-bought items. Each of these has implications for purchase and repurchase and they are amenable in differing degrees to marketer influence.

In India whole automobile sector is consist of Two-wheelers, Three-wheelers, Passenger vehicles and Commercial vehicles. Only Passenger vehicle (luxury Car) is considered for this study due to limited resources. A passenger vehicle is any kind of automobile used to transport private passengers, including a van, which has been approved for the use on public motorways. Before 1982 in India automobile sector was a close market with only five players. Consumer had long waiting periods and only outdate models of cars was available. It was completely seller's market. (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, SIAM).

From 2008 onwards more than 35 market players are competing in this sector. Indian companies are gaining acceptance globally. Indian Government had set up of National Automotive Board to act as facilitator between the Government and Industry. Government has proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) to support lower raw material cost. According to National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020, domestic sales of passenger vehicles will grow from 2.6 million in 2015 to 9.4 to 13.4 million in 2026. Government has launched the scheme namely Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME India) under NEMMP 2020 in the Union Budget for 2015-16 with an initial outlay of Rs. 75 Cr.

Luxury vehicles are high-end vehicles offering more comfort and safety than traditional vehicles. They have several security technologies and comfort amenities such as electronic stability control, DVD entertainment system, anti-lock brakes, massaging seats, active seat bolster, and remote start. These vehicles offer higher performance and better handling than their traditional counterparts. Luxury vehicles are also considered as a status symbol for conspicuous consumption. (Society of Indian Car Manufacturers, SIAM)

The Indian luxury car market is dominated by Audi, 2015's market leader with sales of 11,292 units; followed by Mercedes with 11,213 units and BMW which sold just over 7,000 units. They account for 95% of India's luxury car market and are now focusing on the 'millennial generation' looking for compact saloons as a smaller, less expensive alternative to premium luxury cars. Mercedes expects its compact cars sales to position the company as market leader in the Indian luxury automaker industry. (Confederation of Indian Industries, CII, 2015)

Bently: The british bently's glorious history has been associated with the world's leading heads of state. British queen has bullet proof Bently only used for her public appearances. Indian Strategy: It introduced Azure and Continentel GTC brands in 2007in delhi, aims to open its second outlet in mumbai in 08.It is hoping to sell over 25 cars annually. Azure and Continentel GTC cost Rs 3.8 crore and Rs 2.1 crore, respectively. (Neha Bothra, 2015)

Italian super luxury car-maker Automobile Lamborghini today rolled out an exclusive limited edition of Gallardo LP550-2for sports car enthusiasts in the country. The super sports car is priced at Rs 3.06 cr (ex-showroom Maharashtra). Lamborghini India Operations Head Pavan Shetty told that they have launched only six cars, designed and manufactured exclusively for India's most discerning super sports car enthusiasts. Besides, the super-car is also adorned with the tri-colour stripes that run through the entire length of the car, from its front bonnet to the roof and the engine bonnet. (Confederation of Indian Industries, CII, 2015)

Shreyans Group that retails Porsche and Ferrari claimed to have sold 10 Porsches in Kanpur till date. Inordinate high duties, varying tax structures, bureaucratic delays, red-tapism, exchange rate volatility, and imposition of caveats, political and regulatory landscape are other significant challenges being faced by the luxury industry. According to ASSOCHAM, high net-worth individuals in India spend over 40% of their monthly income on some of the world's largest luxury brands.

And now the government's decision to allow 100% FDI in single-brand retail will act as a big boost for foreign luxury brands. Despite challenges like infrastructure, the reach of this sector will definitely move beyond major cities, indicating a bright future. Most luxury brands would want a 100% control on their destiny if they want to consider serious investment in a country. A 100% subsidiary also means greater psychological commitment from the brand, which leads to greater awareness and understanding of the unique issues on the ground and a much greater desire to work towards changing them, all of which will be welcome consequences. Expansion is still slow, Mumbai and Delhi still the hub of action and store footprints and product distribution is still low. On the whole, however, challenges exist and are not likely to be resolved easily in the near future. (Made in India plan 2016)

The Indian market, at 1% of the global luxury market, is still small; the luxury products market in China is $12-13 billion and Europe is 40% of the global market (Hundekari, 2012).

Appadurai (1986) lists five characteristics of luxury:
(1) Restriction to elites by law or price.
(2) Complexity of acquisition – which may or may not reflect real "scarcity".

(3) Semiotic virtuosity.
(4) Codes for "appropriate" consumption demanding specialized knowledge.
(5) High degree of linkage of their consumption to body, person and personality.

Growing demand due to rising income, young population, Greater availability of credit and financing options, Strong growth in exports, improved road Infrastructure and environment concern have urge the companies to launch their product.

The growth trend in passenger vehicles is:

Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Passenger Vehicles	29,82,772	31,46,069	32,31,058	30,87,973	32,21,419	34,13,859

Source: SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers 2016)

To generate employment and growth Government launched Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26 in 2015 which will emphasis on manufacturing plants in India (Made in India) and growth in export demand is set to accelerate. It targets a fourfold growth in the automotive industry because India has significant cost advantage due to low manpower cost, good supplier base and raw material. By this way auto firms save 10-25% on operations cost vis-à-vis Europe and Latin America (Association of component Manufacturers Association of India, ACMA) which will help in export.

India has proven to be a frugal hub for Automobile OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer) due to its location and skill advantage. India is a now a part of the global strategy for all major automobile companies; every company is planning to set up their manufacturing base in the country and are also exploiting its option as an export hub.

Personal attributes including safety, price quality inference/value for money, ride quality on highway, after-sale maintenance cost, looks of the car/exterior design/exterior styling/attention getting, availability of the service network, interior comfort, initial price of the car/Cost to buy,

fuel efficiency/fuel economy, information regarding repairing and maintenance services, performance, advancing technology, superior service, engine power, customer relationship management, delivery time, resale value, were noted as significantly considered integrated marketing attributes that the customer give importance to while making a choice of the car brand.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the post liberalization scenario of the automobile industry in India and the existing brand positions being adopted by the luxury car manufacturers.
- To determine the effectiveness of brand positions by analyzing the impact on consumer in terms of their brand choice, satisfaction and loyalty intention.
- To explore and suggest brand positioning in regard to the current scenario for luxury car manufacturers and marketers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose is to identify dimensions of brand positions that could be developed by an organization to differentiate their brand in a meaningful way to customers. The key assumption supporting this study is that effective positioning is a mutually beneficial process to both the marketer and the consumer. This is because positioning is philosophy of understanding and meeting unique customer needs.

Effective positioning offers the customer benefits to solve a problem related to their needs and help the firm to explore market opportunities. Similarly, the research will help the company to understand relation between brand positioning and customer preference. Selection of strategy which impact most on the consumers will be easy for an organisation. Study will help them in the selection of celebrity for endorsement.

REVIEW

The report 'Analyzing the Global Luxury Car Market 2014-2020" highlights key dynamics of the global luxury car market. The growing opportunity in the sector has been investigated along with analysis of the four major markets of luxury cars: United States, Europe, China and India. The Initiatives and performance of key global players along with current market scenario has also been studied.

The overall luxury industry tracked by Bain & Company comprises 10 segments, led by luxury cars, luxury hospitality and personal luxury goods, which together account for approximately 80% of the total market. The overall industry has posted steady growth of 4%, to an estimated €1.08 trillion in retail sales value in 2016. Yet among specific categories, there was a clear spread in this past year's performance.

• Luxury cars remained the top-performing segment (growing 8%), particularly in the very high end of the market, within which sales were strong in China.

• Luxury hospitality (up 4%), luxury cruises (up 5%) and fine restaurants all benefited from growth in luxury travel.

• The beauty, fine wines and spirits, and fine food segments all grew, reflecting a redirection of luxury spending away from goods and toward personal pampering and experiences.

• The private jet market contracted, and yacht sales stagnated; unlike luxury cars, neither segment has been able to benefit from growing demand in China. (Ban and Company, 2016)

The global luxury car market has seen been relatively untouched by the financial crisis and has been posting growth driven by the emerging markets. The three German players BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz account for approximately 80% share of the global luxury car market. While BMW is the global leader, there is stiff competition between the three players. (Bain & Company, 2016)

Post a six year decline now there is optimism for Europe where the luxury car market was expected to expand by 2% in 2014 China became the largest auto market in the world in 2009, leaving the US behind. Be it passenger cars or luxury, China is the new focus market for auto

manufacturers around the world. It is projected that the luxury car market in China will grow at an annual compounded rate of 12% in 2014-2020 while the overall passenger car market will grow at 8%. (Knight frank, 2016)

Together, India, China, and Russia have produced a significant number of millionaires over the past 10 years. However, China and Russia's luxury car consumption is much higher than India's. Luxury market in India is gradually gaining attention. Though the 'buzz', this sector is generating is disproportionately high in comparison to the size of the market, but it shows that the global luxury brands do recognize the high potential of the Indian luxury markets. Till a decade back, luxury retail was only meant for the with just a few luxury brands available and that too in five star consumption of elites hotels. Over the years, India's increasing urbanization rate has monetarily empowered the consumer which has further helped luxury market to set a firm foot for itself. (Neha Bothra 2015)

According to Indian Brand Equity Foundation (2016): The Indian luxury car market expanded at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 37.12% during FY07-15, with sale of 50,000 luxury car units in 2015. The market is dominated by players such as BMW, Mercedes, Audi, Jaguar, etc. In 2015, Audi sold 11,292 units, followed by Mercedes, which sold 11,213 units, while BMW sold 7,000 luxury car units during the same year. The Indian luxury car market is expected to grow from USD 14.7 billion in 2015 to USD 18.3 billion in 2016. India has the world's 12th largest HNI (High Networth Individuals) population, with a growth of 20.8 per cent (highest among the top 12 countries) With expansion in the education and realty sectors, and increasing wealth of IT professionals, more consumers aspire to own luxury cars Affluent class of the country is driving the demand of the luxury cars. The Indian luxury car market is estimated to expand at a CAGR of 25 per cent during 2012–20 and reach 150,000 units by 2020 (accounting for 4 per cent of the estimated 6.8 million unit domestic car market) The luxury SUV segment is growing at about 50 per cent, while luxury sedans are increasing 25–30 per cent Audi to launch Q7 SUV and new sports car TT later in the year. Volvo, which sold 1,423 models in India during 2015, is planning to launch six new luxury models in the country during 2016.

Ramita Verma, Shubhkamana Rathore (2013), studied the luxury car segment of India. Study revealed that the luxury car market is growing at a steady speed of 25% per annum with more

numbers of luxury car entering Indian car Market. The purpose of the study was PEST analysis of Indian Luxury Car Market and the future of the luxury car market in India.

Kotler and Keller (2006) specified that brand image is the different perceptions and beliefs consumers held, as reflected in the associations consumers' memory may grasp. The brand identity and positioning is central to developing strong customer base and brand equity. The target market and the perceived differentiation from competitors are core concepts of positioning.. At the same time, both authors argue that segmentation and positioning are often treated as independent concepts, in practice and in the literature. Nonetheless, they claim, positioning is valueless if outside of its target segment.

Brand positioning is an important phenomenon which leads to build up the brand image of the brand in the mind of the customer. Celebrity endorsements are an easy and effective way to build strong brand positioning (Murugantham and Kaliyamoorthy, 2009). They emphasis on celebrity endorsement mainly in female and children products but not on adults so using celebrity in car marketing is not so beneficial as compared to other products but they also found that celebrity do lead to the good communication of the positioning. Celebrity endorsement is an easy way to connect with consumers. Celebrities enjoy public recognition and they can use this recognition on behalf of a product by appearing in an advertisement for the product. Strong celebrities can help the consumers to connect with the brand and lead them to retail outlets to purchase the brand. Celebrities can reduce the time for customer to move from awareness to action but if offering of product is not according to customer than retention is difficult.

Positioning refers to the development of a distinct image for the product or service in the mind of the customer, an image that will differentiate the offering from competing ones and faithfully communicate to the target audience that the particular product or service will fulfill their needs better than competing brands (Leon, Leslie, Ramesh, Joseph, 2012).

Arpita Srivastava and Mitu Matta (2014) found majority of respondents do rely upon friends and advertisements in Delhi NCR region but purchase decision is self, not of friends and family. They found significant relation between occupation and usage of car. They also insisted that customers are purchasing the cars not only as a means of transport but as a status symbol also.

E. Thangasamy & Dr. Gautam Patikar (2014) says Consumer decision making varies with the type of buying decision. Comparatively, complex and expensive purchases, like durable procurements are likely to involve more buyer deliberations and more participants on the point of purchase and they have degree of differences and preferences. You can't get cars in duty- free. Cars are the biggest show-off of status and wealth. It also is a very male product. And the luxury consumer in India is male-dominated, except in jewellery. The social factors, physical factors, and marketing mix elements were strongly associated with the buying behaviour of customer (Fatimah Furaiji, 2014).

Income influences the purchasing decision of any customer when they want to purchase any brand of consumer durables. Nishant Srivastava and Apurva anand (2015) searched that people are shifting from normal vehicle to luxury vehicle, changing with the time because they also need more comfort, not only for comfort or discomfort but also reducing the health related problem and getting more safety. In India auto vehicle has being playing very important role in everyone's life. On an average person travels minimum 20 km with maximum 150 km daily, due to this they suffer with the whole body disorder problem. People who travel daily they suffer with having a problem of spinal pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, by the continuously driving there is so many chances of lower back pain injury from lifting increased due to improper design and unbalanced pressure distribution. Overall contour and proper designing directly or indirectly affects human's life. So for overcoming by these problem people do not hesitate to spend more money for getting more comfortable. So it is must to provide proper design for reducing this problem.

Rajeskumar (2015) study found that seat comfort is issue for the users. Expectations of customers regarding the seat comfort are continuously increasing. The basic components of the car user is comfort.

Vishal Rana and Lokhande (2015) study says customer satisfaction is crucial for business performance, as it is the driver of customer loyalty and consecutive retention. One could say that it is much more expensive to acquire new customers than retain current ones, as the costs associated with the customer recruitment are higher than the connected with customer retention. It is obvious that satisfied customers, satisfied employees and satisfied shareholders all have one

common characteristic that they are positive and enthusiastic about the company. The automobile companies if wants to retain their customers for long should focus on appropriate marketing mix. Similarly the automobile companies should develop an efficient system of receiving complaints and encourage consumers to record their complaints as soon as they occur.

RESEARCH GAP

Based on review researcher found that Celebrities do have impact in positioning of brand but they mainly helpful in children and female buyers Murugantham and Kaliyamoorthy (2009). Green Marketing is emerging trend in western countries and few brands have positioned them as Socially Responsible brand Shuili du (2013) which may be new positioning concept in Asian countries. According to Hemanth Kumar, S.Franklin John , S.Senith (2014) Indian youngsters are highly influenced by the cultural factors because they move around everywhere for educational purpose or Job. They may see different culture of people everywhere .They would like to change themselves whenever they wish too so if they are attracted by different culture of people, their buying decision will change accordingly. So brands also have to consider it accordingly while designing their offer.

In automobile sector working woman segment is emerging, which have tremendous growth. Working women have their own mind in decision to purchase the car that appeal to them. As the number of women car owners is increasing, using car for their office, personal and family work, this segment is becoming an influential group, calls attention of car manufacturers have to focus it accordingly while designing their offer.

Location for study is new and different to other studies so interesting to know the how brand positioning affect the customer in this area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESIS

- ## Research approach and Design:

  The use of research approach in the present study is quantitative. Apart from the data collection from the secondary sources and the existing literature, survey is the predominant research method in this work.

- ## Universe and sample population:

  Universe of the study is population of Rajasthan (>1,00,000).
  Convenience sampling.
  Convenience sampling with 95% level of confidence sample size will be 400 (Glenn D. Israel, 2013).

- ## Data Sources:

  The present work is an empirical research based on both primary and secondary data. The theory has been precisely developed from secondary sources of information and although study of various academic works in the field has been attempted, particularly for formulation of the problem. Self-administered questionnaire will be the main source of colleting the primary data which include items on car manufacturer's brand positioning strategies and their impact on consumer preference, satisfaction and loyalty.

- ## Sample area, Sample Design and Survey Sample:

  The data will be collected from Rajasthan (Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, Jodhpur), where population is quite heterogeneous with various dimensions such as religion, caste, customs, traditions, social hierarchy, language, literacy, education, occupation, income etc. Ten Brands will be selected on the basis of judgment sampling.

- **Selection of Car Manufacturers:**

  Audi

  Mercedes-Benz

  BMW

  JLR

  Volvo

  Bently

  Lamborghini

  Porsche

  Ferrari

- **Hypothesis of the study :**

  H1: Comfort design positioning has influence on car purchase decision.

  H2: Safety positioning has influence on car brand loyalty.

  H3: Social responsibility positioning has influence on car purchasing decision.

  H4: Green marketing positioning has influence on car purchasing decision.

  H5: Interior design has influence on consumer satisfaction.

- **Data Analysis :**

  Percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations will be used to explain the direction and extent of the significant difference. Correlations and multiple regressions will be used to bring out the significant relationships and effects of brand positioning. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) will be used. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) will used for analysis of the data gathered to bring out the significant influences of study variables.

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